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ABSTRACT

New Mexico CURRENTS is an ongoing project that provides teams of educators from 11 elementary and secondary schools with culturally relevant humanities content and technical assistance in curriculum development and methodology. After being immersed in a rich knowledge base of New Mexican arts and humanities, the educator teams are expected to generate new curriculum and teaching models that can be adopted by other schools and districts. Most participants are Hispanic and female, and hold a master's degree or higher. Project activities included symposia and workshops for participants, a meeting for school administrators, and site visits to participating schools by project coordinators and an external evaluator. Analysis of pre- and posttraining survey data from participants and written responses from teachers and students revealed the positive impact of the project on teacher knowledge, teaching strategies, and student outcomes. Teachers reported new knowledge of cultural content, alternative student assessment, and program evaluation; increased access to resources and expert contacts; and improved attitudes toward multicultural issues. Pedagogical changes include increases in collaboration among teachers, parents, and community members; interdisciplinary and thematic approaches to curriculum presentation; and classroom use of multiage grouping, cooperative learning, and peer tutoring. Positive student outcomes include better attitudes toward education and school, increased self-esteem and cultural pride, better attendance, and improved writing and speaking skills. (SV)

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ED 366 496

EMPOWERING TEACHERS TO CHANGE CURRICULUM AND SCHOOLS: EVALUATION OF A PROGRAM

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Paper presented at the
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This paper was prepared as part of the evaluation research program of the Hispanic Culture Foundation's New Mexico CURRENTS project. The work was partially supported by funding received through the Rockefeller Foundation's CHART project and from the Kellogg Foundation. The views expressed are those of the author and are not necessarily shared by CURRENTS, CHART, or Kellogg.

This paper presents the results of an evaluation study of an ongoing statewide project to provide teams of educators from eleven elementary and secondary schools with culturally-relevant humanities content and technical assistance in curriculum development and methodology. Lessons learned through this study and relations to the change process are explored at end of the presentation of results.

The paper has five major sections. The first is an overview of the entire project. The second is a description of activities organized and conducted at the project level during the 1991-92 school year. In the third section, a brief description of the program at each site is provided. Impact analysis is presented in section four, organized around three areas: teacher knowledge, pedagogical strategies, and student outcomes. Finally, section five presents the conclusion.

Data for this report came from multiple sources including:

* field notes from direct observations made on-site by both the external evaluator and project staff;
* observation check-lists completed by staff during site visits;
* interviews with participants and staff by the external evaluator and her assistant;
* surveys of participant and student demographics;
* surveys of participants' attitudes and practices, completed in October and May;
* district curricula guides in the areas of English, social studies, and the arts;

* lesson plans created and submitted by participants;

* Likert-type scale and open-ended questions on written evaluations completed after each activity;

* samples of student writing in response to a direct question from the evaluator;

* self-evaluations submitted by each school project.

Multiple methods were employed to analyze and interpret the data. Descriptive statistical analysis was used on much of the data, and inferential statistical analysis was applied to the pre-post survey data. Qualitative analysis revealed patterns through content analysis of curricula, lesson plans, open-ended responses, and interviews. Examples of evidence are included in the body of the report, and full back-up documentation is on file at the project office.

External evaluation plays a critical part in the CURRENTS project. Summative reports are provided annually for the various funding agencies, but are only one type of evaluation product. Perhaps more important from the project's view is formative evaluation. The external evaluator is an observer-participant in most activities conducted at the project level and provides feedback on product and process to the project staff. She also reviews curriculum documents created by the teacher teams, and makes site visits to the schools. Thus evaluation findings continually inform the project. The findings are shared with school team members as well, who use them to illustrate their local successes.

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

New Mexico CURRENTS is an effort of the Hispanic Culture Foundation, and is part of the Rockefeller Foundation curriculum collaborative CHART (Collaboratives for Humanities and Arts Teaching). Major funding for the project comes from the Rockefeller and Kellogg Foundations, and through the New Mexico State Board of Education using special legislatively-appropriated funds. Begun in 1990, the goal of CURRENTS is to empower teachers by providing them with a rich knowledge base in multicultural (New Mexican) arts and humanities. After being immersed in the content, teams of teachers from the same school are expected to generate new curriculum and approaches for teaching that curriculum. Over time, it is believed the models they develop can be adopted by individual schools and districts.

Collaboration is built with local, state, and national institutions and resources. CURRENTS is not conceived as an enrichment, special education, or honors program. It is intended to effect systemic curricular change for the broadest possible spectrum of children within the participating schools.

The project is administered through the Hispanic Culture Foundation, a not-for-profit agency which provides service through educational programs, technical assistance to artists, publications, and cultural events. The executive director of the foundation serves as director of the CURRENTS project; two program coordinators provide staff assistance in arranging activities and working with the schools. The foundation's director of finance and the secretary also provide services to the project. The board of directors of the foundation lends important guidance and members serve as resources for the

project. A CURRENTS steering committee provides regular consultation and program direction.

Eleven schools (five elementary and six secondary), located across the state in seven public school districts and one Indian pueblo, participated in the project during 1991-92. Seven of those schools have completed two years in the project; the other four have completed the first year. Schools were accepted for inclusion in the project based on completion of an application and the development of a plan of action. A team of six, comprised of classroom teachers and (ideally) one administrator, receives training and special assistance from the project office throughout the year. Each team then works to share knowledge and institutionalize curriculum change in its respective school. While their approaches are diverse, all the teams use joint-planning, and interdisciplinary and cross grade-level strategies.

The majority (59%) of the approximately 70 team members are Hispanic, 35% are Anglo, 1 is African-American, 1 is Native American, and 1 identified herself as "other." More than half the team members are between 35 and 44 years of age; another 37% is over 45 years of age. Females account for 69% of the group. More than two-thirds (68%) of the team members have earned the masters degree or higher. Forty-five percent (45%) of those degrees are in education, 24% are in humanities, 21% are in educational administration, and 8% are in counseling. Only one team member reported advanced work in math/science. The vast majority of respondents (83%) completed their advanced education in New Mexico. The primary area of undergraduate studies is education (58%), but 40% of respondents indicated earning an undergraduate degree in the humanities.

Team members are experienced teachers. Forty-five percent (45%) of them have more than 15 years experience; only 6% have less than 5 years experience. Most of their experience is in New Mexico schools. Just more than half (58%) of the responding team members participated in CURRENTS for the second year; the remainder are first year participants. Almost one-third of respondents reported involvement with other restructuring efforts at their schools besides CURRENTS. These efforts include Re:Learning, New Mexico 21st Century awards, federal bilingual projects, site based management, and others.

The team members reported having direct contact with more than 3,000 students in their classes. The gender split is almost even, with 48% males. Sixty-five percent (65%) of CURRENTS students are Hispanic, 23% are Anglo, 8% are Native American, with the remainder coming from other ethnic groups. Seventy-eight percent (78%) of the students use English as their home language, 19% use Spanish, and 3% use other languages such as Tiwa and Navajo. The percentage of CURRENTS students reported by their teachers to be living in single parent homes is 32%. A large number (714) of students is reported to be eligible for free or reduced lunch. Special education students from at least six of the New Mexico recognized exceptionalities (gifted, learning disabled, behavior disordered, communication disordered, physically handicapped, and visually impaired) participate in CURRENTS classes. Teachers classify 62% of their students as *regular*, 16% as *developmental*, 12% as *enriched*, and 10% as *honors*.

Elements of CURRENTS include workshops, symposia, and summer institutes provided regularly for all team members. These are

fully described in section II. Identification and links with resources and collaborators in the humanities and arts are provided to the schools. Staff members work individually with school teams to identify and solve problems, while helping teams develop qualitatively different curricula. CURRENTS encourages, but does not mandate, whole-school projects. Small grants to defray some of the costs for additional teacher planning time, purchase of materials, honoraria for guest speakers, and field trip expenses are made annually to each team.

A common theme, *Streams of History: Our School, Our Community, Ourselves*, runs through all the projects. Teams develop curricula which fit the unique characteristics of their schools and communities. In this model, teachers serve as facilitators for students who research and write about their families, schools, communities, state, and the world. Collaboration with local scholars and artists, institutions of higher education, historical societies, museums, newspapers, churches, and other archival collections is an important part of each project. Further information about the projects is provided in section III of this report.

II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The *Hispanic Culture Institute (HCI)* is the starting point for each year's CURRENTS' activities. The first institute was convened in June 1989, through funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The following summer, 1990, the institute provided the basis for the first year of the CURRENTS project. Similarly, the 1991 summer institute was the first activity of the 1991-92 CURRENTS project year. Beginning with

that institute, the year's activities are reported below....

Quarterly Symposia

Four three-day symposia were convened for team members during 1991-92. Three of the meetings were held in Albuquerque at a downtown hotel, arranged by project staff. The fourth was held in Las Cruces and Silver City, with all arrangements made by team members in the two host schools in the southern part of the state....

Special Meetings and Workshops

Museum Workshop An optional two-day workshop was held in Albuquerque in August for team members....

Evaluation Workshop Convened in Albuquerque the day prior to the October symposium, participation in this all-day workshop was limited to two members from each team; 21 teachers attended....

Administrators' Meeting Superintendents, board members, and other central office personnel from the seven districts and one pueblo where CURRENTS projects are located were invited to join with the 11 building principals and project staff to learn more about CURRENTS. Held in Albuquerque in January 1992...

Site Visits

The two program coordinators and the external evaluator made a total of more than 30 visits to CURRENTS schools during the 1991-92 year. In some cases the visits were the result of an invitation from the school team and allowed the project staff to observe culminating activities for units of study or other special events. Staff members and the evaluator also scheduled visits to schools to meet with teams, individual teachers, and administrators, and to observe CURRENTS classes.

III. SCHOOL PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

...

IV. PROJECT IMPACT

Through examining data from the 1991-92 CURRENTS project, evidence of impact was found in three areas, teacher knowledge, pedagogical strategies, and student outcomes. Each of the three areas is discussed in detail below. An analysis and interpretation of pre- and post-survey data from team member questionnaires was one important data source. Other sources, including teacher and student written responses, are included in the body of each section.

Teacher Knowledge

Across all the schools, teachers reported they gained new knowledge as a result of the training provided through CURRENTS. This knowledge comes as a direct result of the symposia and institutes. Topics covered during 1991-92 include:

Modern Indo-Hispanic perspectives
Contemporary Hispanic art
Spanish oral tradition
Spanish literature
Modern Hispanic poetry

Pueblo Indian culture
Native American poetry
Native American folklore traditions
Native American storytelling

African-American storytelling
Black history and literature

New Mexico architectural roots
Ice age in New Mexico
New Mexico life zones
Albuquerque life zones
Camino Real importance
Mimbreno culture

Mining in southern New Mexico
Political culture in New Mexico
Women in New Mexico politics
Modern New Mexico writers
Artistic traditions in the Southwest
Contemporary visual arts
Contemporary music
Archaeological techniques
Cultural sensitivity
Oral history
Literature and cultural change
Religion as an indicator of cultural change
Symbols and culture
Family values and culture
Models of arts integration
Arts in education

Student assessment
Program evaluation

Asked to reflect at the end of the year, every teacher reported both a deepened appreciation for and a deepened understanding of the humanities. This change in knowledge is not only self-reported, it is evident in survey responses, and visible in classrooms and lesson plans. CURRENTS content is not prescribed nor replicated across schools but it is humanities-based; a teacher wrote, *...each team has made the information fit their site.*

Through CURRENTS, teachers are provided with lists of resources, contacts, and assistance in tracking down illusive materials. The project provides *...lots of assistance, so we can actually develop something.* Another teacher reflected, *They're [project staff] interested not only in getting us involved, but in giving us information.* When asked to reflect on *the best thing about CURRENTS*, teachers frequently cited knowledge-based things. They wrote:

* *seeing other teachers', schools', and college educators' views in perspective*

* *the sharing of information between schools*
* *the content information presented*
* *its interdisciplinary focus*
* *its people, its resources, and its ability to share*
* *the exposure to invaluable resources*
* *the resources (speakers, books, other teachers, staff) and the excitement of learning more and better ways to help our students*
* *the resources we're exposed to (made aware of) and connections we can make to apply to our individual school needs*
* *it has provided a wealth of resources/has opened our eyes to another world*
* *the exposure to "important" artists and authors and ideas*
* *the quality of presenters and curriculum - totally refreshing - more please!*

Teachers appreciated learning materials directly from the authors or experts in the field. One teacher observed, *We get valuable information from the horse's [expert's] mouth, not out of books.* Somewhat euphemistically, a teacher wrote after an institute, *...the dynamic academic energy of our presenters stirred a slumbering energetic force within us and we became consumed with an insatiable desire to learn more, to experience more, and to transcend the self-imposed boundaries of complacency. Thank you!* Artists, poets, writers and historians all made presentations to the group, and many accepted invitations to come to individual schools during the year.

Based on evaluations after activities, an average of 83% of respondents indicated they would be able to immediately use the new materials they had learned. Visits to classrooms by project staff confirmed that teachers created and presented lessons based on knowledge they gained at CURRENTS activities. For example, a teacher wrote, *A year ago it wouldn't have occurred to me to find Black plays and performers.* This year, he added that component to his curriculum.

In some cases, the same content included in a symposium was used by teachers in classroom lessons. For example, multicultural storytelling was the subject of the October symposium; during the year several teachers incorporated storytelling into their curricula, both by inviting storytellers into their classes and by helping students tell stories to younger students.

In other cases, the knowledge gained by teachers was useful not only in its specificity but also as an example of the kinds of resources available on particular topics. Once presented with an idea, piece of literature, etc., teachers were able to build upon it and include it in their curricula. For example, several teachers had their students undertake family or school history projects during the year, using oral history techniques to gather information from older relatives or graduates. Almost half the teachers in CURRENTS indicated they have used oral history during or before the 1991-92 school year. Following the 1992 Hispanic Culture Institute, which provided participants an opportunity to go into the field and develop oral histories of an old Albuquerque neighborhood, 90% of the teachers indicated they would use the technique during 1992-93.

The humanities and multicultural foci of CURRENTS were new to many participants. Teachers reported being confident enough, as a result of CURRENTS, to investigate topics and learn right along with their students. Teachers demonstrated an expanded knowledge of New Mexico history and familiarity with multicultural literature, and incorporated that content into their classes. One teacher wrote, *For the first time, I feel*

truly New Mexican. I feel like I'm part of a community of people who care about beautiful things, aesthetics.

CURRENTS teachers indicated they have served as resources to other teachers not part of the team. A teacher wrote, *There is more faculty interest in researching the history of New Mexico.* The CURRENTS team fostered that interest through their knowledge and work with their students. Pre- and post-survey data show that, over the year, CURRENTS teachers have gained a broader knowledge base and learned new subject matter, know more about community resources, have developed more appropriate and better curricula, and have a different (improved) attitude towards multicultural issues.

Teachers also indicated they learned new things about student (alternative) assessment and program evaluation. A teacher wrote, *Alternative assessment ideas tap into the wholeness of the student as well as being culturally/personally relevant.* Application of this new knowledge is confirmed by the assessments observed in use and written into lesson plans, and by the self-evaluations each team prepared of its own project at the end of the year. Teachers indicated they have grown both personally and professionally.

Pedagogical Strategies

In addition to knowledge and content changes, CURRENTS has fostered pedagogical changes. Strategies modeled in symposia (oral history, interactive presentations, cooperative learning groups, trainer-of-trainer formats) were implemented in many classrooms and observed by project staff. On the evaluation after every presentation, participants usually agreed (68% to 98%, average 90%) that the material added to their instructional

repertoire. They learned new techniques, spent time planning with their teams, and practiced writing activities. The following comments were recorded on the evaluations of the February symposium, after school teams presented lessons to each other based on a piece of literature.

> *Before the symposium started I doubted its usefulness but this was great - the variety of ideas/materials/techniques was extremely valuable.*
>
> *This is an eye-opener. I really feel fortunate to be part of this motivated and excellent team.*
>
> *This was valuable time for me. It gave me good ideas; sharing with other teachers helped me.*
>
> *...especially beneficial for our team - possibilities of new avenues. We're ready to move forward in new directions with more strengths.*
>
> *...now I've realized that the hands-on learning I participated in was an enhancement to my teaching that far surpasses the traditional lecture.*

The teaming and collaboration that CURRENTS requires is truly new to some teachers. A teacher reflected, *I was a very traditional teacher. This [CURRENTS] gave me a chance to change my style or leave the profession.* The team approach has been especially important to one teacher, who reported it has allowed her to *value what individuals bring to the setting. CURRENTS is a way of thinking, of viewing the profession differently.* It has allowed team members to share ideas with each other. After a symposium, one participant wrote, *These symposia provide a great opportunity for our team to work and grow together and to see how other teams are progressing.* Teachers have discovered that working together and *pre-planning takes a lot of time and energy,* but one teacher expressed the feelings of many when she said,

teachers are finding time to coordinate plans and implement joint activities. Although there is a major time investment, the benefits are deemed to be worthwhile, especially in meeting students' individual needs. For example, a teacher wrote, *team teachers adapt teaching modes to different situations*. This is a powerful pedagogical strategy.

In most schools, the collaboration extends beyond the CURRENTS team to include other faculty, parents, and sometimes community members. CURRENTS teams forged relationships with CURRENTS teams in other schools and with community organizations and universities to enhance instruction for students. Team members assumed management roles in working with various groups; in some cases this has led to changes in schedules and the addition of new programs. For example, common planning time for team members was arranged with the cooperation of the administration in several schools, and new classes such as African-American history and English-communication skills block and English-history block were added to some secondary offerings. The fact that teachers initiated school activities, programs, and courses is significant. A teacher wrote, *There is a commitment to finding methods that work - we test out ideas, then we can evaluate what's been done*. A team member from one school told the interviewer, *Everyone feels involved, and everything is a learning experience for us*.

Another hallmark of the CURRENTS pedagogy is the use of interdisciplinary and thematic approaches. According to a teacher, *The project [CURRENTS] expects us to integrate curriculum, present multicultural things, and change materials,*

approaches and assessment. Team members work together to develop and present interdisciplinary units; for many teachers the focus is on project-oriented classwork. For example, at the high school level:

* a Spanish I class took a program of poems, songs and dances into a preschool class at the school
* English and bilingual Spanish classes were combined for units of instruction
* a world history and art I class came together for study
* English, history, art and drama classes worked together.

A team member at one of the high schools remarked, *We're [CURRENTS] the only interdisciplinary team at our school*. One school articulated their belief that they now used the *community-as-text*. They constructed that text through their own and student research.

At the elementary level, schools reported using cross-grade groups and developing curricula around themes. One teacher said, *Teachers are taking more responsibility for decision-making and redesigning the curriculum*. Many schools included special education students in their CURRENTS programs. A teacher reported, *Cross grouping has become accepted*. One school devoted one day each week to CURRENTS; all students took part in activities that integrated curricula. Another elementary school combined social studies, literature and reading activities across the entire school. Team members at that school also developed lessons that cross traditional areas like science with social studies. In addition, hall displays, bulletin boards, and different and more flexible room arrangements demonstrate that CURRENTS team members are changing pedagogical strategies.

Teachers reported placing more emphasis on hands-on approaches to learning. Field trips had a prominent place in many programs, and it was not just students who benefit. A teacher wrote, *More hands-on and out-of-class activities were experienced by students and staff.* One school's team reported that the bus driver for their field trips, a longtime resident of the area, got excited about learning about some of the community resources and eagerly shared some of his experiences with the students.

Many teachers organized students into cooperative learning groups and reported success with that strategy. Peer tutoring was used in several classrooms. Evidence of outcomes-based assessment using performances, presentations, and exhibitions were found in visits to schools. A team member said, *Assessment procedures in our class have shifted from individual assignment grading to a more holistic portfolio-style assessment.*

Almost half the teachers reported using a language other than English (usually Spanish) in their classrooms; only 15% reported "never" using another language. Using another language not only enhances instruction but also validates students' backgrounds and experiences. The confidence to use that language was attributed to CURRENTS by several teachers.

Final evidence of changes in pedagogy were offered through teachers' comments about the follow-up that occurred for CURRENTS project activities. A secondary teacher wrote,

> *Almost everything I've done in 24 years [of teaching] has not been followed up. In CURRENTS, we learn things at the symposium, our team works on them, and the project staff asks us how we're using them. I've never worked as a team before, not even within my discipline (language arts).*

The follow-up and support came not just from the project staff, but from the students, parents, and school administration. As an example,

> *The Taos Day School school board was elected school board of the year [by the BIA]. Their support and belief in CURRENTS programs has helped create a supportive atmosphere for all staff to stretch, grow, and try new teaching strategies.*

On the other hand, at least one school reported a problem with institutionalizing new strategies,

> *Our administrator is from the 'old school' - he doesn't understand why we have to go to all those meetings. He says, 'I was a teacher, I never did that.'*

Finally, teachers offered testimony to the effectiveness of the pedagogy they use with CURRENTS. For example:

> *This program has taught us to treat kids like the principal is now treating teachers.*
>
> *I've never been involved with a program I have been so enthused about.*
>
> *I'm happy with the changes we've made.*
>
> *We've received commendation letters from community groups for the innovative and creative teaching we're doing in our CURRENTS class.*
>
> *I've never been so involved with a program before. I never went to workshops before.*
>
> *Lesson plans used to be kept for a year and thrown out. Now problems and successes are documented.*
>
> *It's [CURRENTS] given me back personal respect and prestige with my career, my profession.*

Pedagogical issues were cited by four teachers in response to a question asking them to identify *the best thing about CURRENTS*. They wrote:

* *fostering collaborative projects, providing financial support, networks, and sharing*
* *validation, support, increased knowledge and understandings*

* *the growth I have undergone in my profession*
* *learning, sharing, giving us the opportunity to be flexible in our classrooms and try new techniques and methods*

Student Outcomes

Changes in attitudes and behaviors are the only student outcomes that can be reported for the 1991-92 year; those changes are positive. However, teachers believed, for the most part, that student achievement improved; it is not yet adequately documented. Future project years will focus on gathering and reporting these data.

As through the pre- post-surveys, teachers reported changes in student attitudes and behaviors in the following areas:

students do more reading and writing
students' writing has improved
students enjoy writing more than in the past
students enjoy literature more than in the past
students are exposed to different literature
students are more aware of multicultural issues
students have a better understanding of their cultural identities
students enjoy school more.

Not only did the survey data show these changes, but similar changes were reported by teams in their end-of-year self-assessments of projects. Examples are provided below, presented by grade level.

Elementary (grades K-6) Three teams cited increased self knowledge, self esteem, and cultural pride as student outcomes. Two teams reported that students have more encouragement from home for CURRENTS projects than for previous activities, and that parent involvement has increased. One team reported its students have a better understanding for and tolerance of other cultures. Students have more respect for community members, and see adults as learners. Participation in a voluntary culture class in one

school rose from about 50% of intermediate level (grades 4-6) students to more than 75%. Accepting individual differences among their peers, cooperating more, participating more, becoming more verbal, completing more work, demonstrating an increased desire to read, and requesting instruction in the Spanish language were all student behaviors reported in elementary schools by teachers. Teachers at one school elaborated:

* *Children are interacting more outside their own classroom and grade levels.*
* *Children's sense of self (who am I?) is clearer in relation to what has and will happen throughout time.*
* *Children are remembering more and internalizing concepts due to hands-on and site activities.*
* *Children have extended study to analyzing current events as related to historical past.*

Secondary (grades 6-12) Teachers at three of the high schools reported their students' having more writing experiences and improving their writing. In one school, students used computers for CURRENTS activities and designed posters and coloring books, for example. In two schools, students were more willing to share information about their families and cultural traditions, and they became more respectful of the contributions of their elders. In at least two schools, CURRENTS students worked with younger children. Teachers reported changes in social skills and academic skills. Students improved their speaking skills, developed evaluative and analytical skills, took pride in their work, used a foreign language in informal (out-of-class) settings, attended class more regularly, had fewer failures, copied work from each other less, and were more pleasant and cooperative. At one high school, students were proud to be "in" CURRENTS. Team members said, *They [students] tell us they wouldn't be in school if it weren't for that class; the kids are*

willing to give up time at night, on Saturdays. In at least two schools teachers reported that students' grade point averages improved, but this was not documented in any other way. They also reported that students completed more work. For example, one teacher reported that before CURRENTS she collected about 80% of student assignments and now more than 95% of assignments are completed. She said, *I've been teaching 16 years - I can see a complete difference in students now, when they're in and out of the interdisciplinary units...[Through CURRENTS] we can realize our primary goal - students enjoying school, wanting to learn.*

At Robertson High School, students enrolled in the CURRENTS class were excited to tell the district superintendent, CURRENTS staff member and the evaluator about their program. One student "performed" a rap about CURRENTS, and many students wrote their thoughts about the program. The students' words follow.

> *What shall I say about a thing that has taught me about the history of my past? Just let it be said 'boys turn into men when you learn to use your head.'*
>
> *Basically, what I've experienced in this class that I've enjoyed is just being able to go on field trips and observe the many sights we've only seen or read about in books.*
>
> *This class is very interesting, not only because of the field trips and not only for fun. This class makes <u>me</u> feel better knowing about my Spanish heritage. And what kind of background I come from. Gonzales and Sampson are teachers who also inspire me. They really get into the projects. And that makes the teaching and learning part more exciting.*
>
> *I was kind of turned off towards history before I took this course. The history I was used to portrayed Native Americans and Hispanics as the bad guys and everyone else as a good guy. Now, in this course, I'm learning that isn't all true.*

I have really enjoyed this class because we are able to go out and see for ourselves. Also I like this class because we are not always reading books, and I like the way the classmates are close.

...We are learning about New Mexican culture that has been lost, almost taken away from the people. This is one way to gain back what was lost.

My experience in CURRENTS is great...I've learned a lot about my own culture, my history, my town, and surrounding areas.

I have been inspired by this class, because we get to share and communicate with each other. At first I was scared to try something new, especially since I just moved here. This class gets me motivated, I look forward to class every single day. I love it.

The only comment I wish to make about this class is that I wish I could take it again, but too bad, I'm a senior. All the field trips are extraordinary. Maybe I can be a student teacher or something.

IV. CONCLUSION

The findings of this evaluation study confirm and extend findings presented in last year's *Summary Formative Report: Year 1* prepared by Dr. Isaura Metz. She presented findings in two components, Curricular Change Process and Knowledge Base. Specific to the Curricular Change Process, Dr. Metz concluded that *What is common to all sites is the focus on gathering historical and cultural data with immediate significance to students, and the use of that data as the medium for learning academic skills and content such as reading and social studies.* That process clearly continued throughout the second year of the project in the original seven schools, and was begun in the four first-year schools. Dr. Metz's conclusion, that *CURRENTS activities represent a significant change from past curricular*

efforts is also borne out by the data from the second year of the project, as presented in this report.

Specific to the Knowledge Base, during the first year, *the bulk of new knowledge related to the chronology and cultures of the two major populations present in New Mexico prior to 1900: Native Americans and Hispanics*. This concentration continued through the second year, as the project provided a multicultural focus for the study of the arts and humanities. This is apparent when considering the topics covered and examples of units developed by teachers, as described in this report.

The first year finding reported by Dr. Metz, that *many participants were unclear as to CURRENTS purpose and felt that they needed more structure and technical assistance on how to proceed with implementation at their school sites*, was not confirmed by the second year study. Participants did not report difficulty in understanding the purpose and intention of CURRENTS. Programs in all 11 schools, while quite different, were identifiable and successful. Furthermore, teachers expressed satisfaction with the support they received from project staff, and in interviews with one member from each team, no one believed the project required too much of her or him. This change can be accounted for in three ways: The project matured in its second year and benefitted from the cumulative experience of participating team members; an additional staff member was added to the project, and responsibilities for school assistance were divided between the two coordinators based on elementary and secondary levels; and symposia and workshops were planned and publicized well in advance, based on input from

school team members, with each symposium including an evaluation component.

As explained above, in its second year CURRENTS achieved gains in three areas. Teacher knowledge was increased through a multicultural approach to humanities and arts content. Teachers reported gaining a better appreciation for and understanding of the humanities. They were presented with myriad resources, both people and materials, and they used those resources during the year as evidenced through lesson plans and site visits. New knowledge in the areas of student assessment (alternative assessment) and program evaluation was also presented to and internalized by teachers during the project year.

Pedagogical strategies were improved through the application of CURRENTS. Teachers strongly agreed their instructional repertoires were increase by exposure to and more experience with such techniques as teaming and collaboration, interdisciplinary and thematic approaches to curricula, cross-grade groupings of students, hands-on approaches including field trips, cooperative learning groups, and the use of a language other than English.

Changes in student outcomes occurred in both attitudes and behaviors. Teachers and students reported that students had improved understandings of self, peers, community members, and elders. Students changed their attitudes about their communities as they learned more about the past, using primary sources and visiting people and places. Student behaviors also changed, in terms of both social and academic skills, although improvement of academic achievement has not yet been fully documented.

During the 1992-93 school year, changes in personnel at the project level, the addition of state level funding (minor) and

recognition, and the effect of cumulative experience promise to provide opportunities for New Mexico CURRENTS to continue to impact arts and humanities curricula in the state's schools. On-going evaluation will document this impact, and specific attention will be focused on capturing indicators of student outcomes.

Lessons

CURRENTS is an example of a curriculum collaborative:

> Subject-area collaboratives focus specifically on the critical examination of practice in a particular discipline, evaluating and developing new pedagogies and deepening teachers' content knowledge (Lieberman & McLaughlin, p. 677).

It focuses on a subject area (arts and humanities), uses a variety of professional and social activities, creates a discourse community. and provides leadership opportunities for participants.

The two years of experience with CURRENTS confirm the findings of Lieberman and McLaughlin (1992). The teachers who participate are willing and eager to be involved in activities that promote their professional growth. They have made changes in their practices, and revised their perspectives on teaching and learning. As some of them make these changes they challenge existing assumptions and structures in their schools and make changes there as well. Changes in student learning are also beginning to be evident, confirming the conclusion of Lieberman, et al. (1991) that "investments in teacher learning are what ultimately feed student learning." Teachers are exposed to a learning environment rich in arts and humanities primary texts

and experiences. As they gain knowledge and experience, they are creating a similar environment for their students.

CURRENTS is also an example of a team-building effort. By focusing efforts on teams of teachers and administrators from specific schools, the project is creating a "learning organization" (Senge, 1990). As material is presented in institutes and symposia, team members help each other understand it and develop ways to integrate it into curriculum. Because they work together, the product is greater than the sum of their individual understandings.

According to Maeroff (1992), team building is a strategy for rebuilding schools. He cites specific benefits that can result from team building activities, defined as

> ...creating a phalanx - including the principal - of true believers who assume ownership of new ideas and learn strategies for implementing them and winning adherents among their colleagues in the school community (513).

Although the purpose of CURRENTS is not explicitly to foster school change, that is the result as teams gather regularly to focus on new knowledge, enriched content, and alternative pedagogies. The notion of creating change by groups is powerful and effective.

The benefits of team building activities identified by Maeroff (1992) are clearly present across CURRENTS:

* a team spirit has developed among participants, and both personal and professional bonding has occurred in many cases;

* members' process skills have improved, as they interact and practice collaboration;

* a more intellectual atmosphere has been created, as participants read and hear directly from poets, artists, historians, and others;

* team members serve as sources of knowledge for their peers in the local schools;

* a network of support for professional development activities has been created by accessing university, community, foundation, and other experts outside the domain of typical elementary and secondary school teachers;

* closer links are being forged between professional development activities and the needs of students.

The results of the CURRENTS project to-date confirm Maeroff's conclusion about team building activities that the "strongest and most likely outcome is a favorable effect on individual members" (518). The challenge is translating the enthusiasm and energy for change into activities that can be developed and maintained to move a whole school forward. Towards that end, future project efforts will be devoted to creating, collecting, and distributing written curriculum materials and references. With those documents in hand, team members will be specifically trained to work with others in their schools and in other schools to both use the materials and create their own multicultural arts and humanities texts. Through this ongoing process, school organizations beyond the 11 CURRENTS schools will be impacted.

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